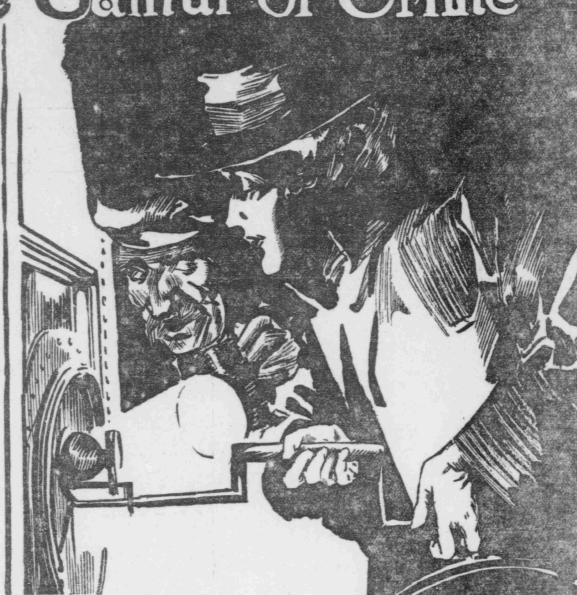
Cal Doman who Has Run the Gamut of Crime





May Churchill, Queen of Women. Crooks

F ALL the women crooks in the world, probably the most daring, the most ingenious, the most versatile. the most mysterious, is May Sharpe, sometimes known as May Churchill, and more widely known

May Churchill, an Enigma to the Police of Four

simply as Chicago May. A year ago May Sharpe was reported as having died in prison in France, where she was serving a sentence for helping to rob the American Express Company in Paris of \$20,000. A few months later a clever, though unknown, woman assisted "Eddie" Guerin, imprisoned for complicity in the American Express robbery, to escape from his living tomb on Devil's Island.

Now from Rio Janeiro, Brazil comes the astonishing news that, infatuated with Mrs. May Churchill Sharpe, a charming American widow, a young Englishman of noble birth, upon being informed that she is none other than Chicago May, a week or so ago, committed suicide.

How, then, did May Sharpe escape from France? Does her name, like that of Guerin on Devil's Island, decorate the stone upon another's grave? And after all, was it not she who aided the daring Guerin in his remarkable flight from the penal rock in the sea?

LTHOUGH her maiden name was Mary Vechs, and her husbard's name was Sharpe, "Chlcago May" is best known as May Churchill. She has also been called at times May Fletcher, May Latimer, Katie Fitzgerald, May Guerin and May Miller. It was under the name of May Miller, wife of George whom May Churchill
Assisted in his Escape
from Devils Island

Eddie Guerin,

France four years ago for her share in the robbery of the American Express Company.

Miner, who saved himself from accompanying Eddie Guerin to Devil's Island by turning State's evidence, is said to have died something over a year ago while still a convict. But one, it seems, cannot believe all such reports from French prisons.

"Eddie" Guerin was reported to have died on Devil's Island, vet during the summer of last year he turned up in New York, almost a physical wreck, after having made an almost miraculous escape from that terrible pens! station, once selected as a living tomb for Captain Dreyfus.

When it was reported that May Churchill-bold.

Miller, that she was convicted and sent to prison in dashing and resourceful "Chicago May"-had succumbed France four years ago for her share in the robbery of to the terrors of French prison life, most of her former dashing and resourceful "Chicago May"—had succumbed to the terrors of French prison life, most of her former friends and acquaintances accepted the report as true. A few months ago a tail, stylish-hooking and handsomely attred woman landed from a British steamship at Rio, Brazil. Giving her name as Mrs. May Churchill Sharpe, she took up quarters at one of the best hotels. Although she is now about 39 years of age, May Churchill appears much younger. Her method of hie, her encounters with the police and her terms in prison have neither furrowed her blooming cheeks nor whitened the wonderful masses of her bronze-red hair.

Of good figure, she is a past-mistress of the art of effective dress. Her gowns are quietly elegant. Moreover, her manners are perfect, her speech that of a well-

educated, correctly bred woman. Always of magnetic presence, she seldem fails to bring her men acquaint-ances to her feet as warm admirers.

Perhaps her fascinating ways and her knowledge of human nature stood her in good stead after her arrival in Rio. In any event, the woman known there as May Sharpe made the acquaintance of many people of social conventes are more than a young Englishman of noble

in Rio. In any event, the woman known there as May Sharpe made the acquaintance of many people of social consequence, among them a young Englishman of noble family, who was residing temporarily there.

Indeed, he is suid to have become deeply smitten, and, after an ardent courtship, laid his honored name and his fortune at her feet. A few weeks ago, however, when he is said to have learned the unhappy truth about the woman who had gained his affections, he premptly shot himself.

If not really affected by the tragedy, Mrs. Sharpe pretended to be, and those who knew her in Rio were under the impression that she intended returning to the United States or England. It is not believed by the poll's, however, that May Churchill will soon venture into any country where the detective bureaus take such a lively interest in her career or whereabouts as they do here and in Great Britain.

A wanderer in many lands, practically expatriated from her own, Mary Vechs was born in New York city, where her father, a German, was an East Side baker. During her girihood she removed to Chicago, where she resided for a number of years. Then she was noticed sock in New York a rather popular concert hall singer, who from that time on was known as "Chicago May."

Concert halls on Coney Island and the Bowery knew her well. So did the "badger" men, the expert pickpockets and swell crooks generally, for she associated with them almost from the first.

In time, she became one of the most expert women in the world at the "badger" game—that of luring men with money into places where they were blackmailed or robbad outright.

After a time, "Chicago May" added another side line to her activity as a crook. She became an enterprising shoplifter.

STOLE IN GREAT STYLE

Her favorite plan was to drive in great style up to a fashionable fur or drygoods store and in passing ma-jestically, along the alsies, to sweep from the counters to the floor a number of articles of as great value as

Then, while an accomplice engaged the attention of the salesman, she would attach the articles to hooks beneath her skirts, stroll nonchalantly out, get into her

beneath her skirts, stroll nonchalantly out, get into her cab and drive off.

In spite of the notoriety that attached to her career, May Vechs succeeded in escaping arrest until 1896, when one of her boldly planned and daringly executed "badger" games brought her to grief.

After leaving this trouble behind, she concluded that a change of scene and air might prove beneficial and a new field of work more profitable. Consequently, she graciously permitted London to make her acquaintance. It was in 1901 that she sprang an entirely new game on the police of that city. It caused them to sit up and rub their eyes. In fact, it was not until a number of complaints, all giving similar details, had been turned into Scotland Yard that the authorities realized that they had a new woman crook of nerve and resourcefulness with whom to deal.

Her happy little plan at this time was to select a man with tempting diamonds flashing from his scarf or shirt front and induce him to take her driving in a hansom or a four-wheel cab.



George Miller, a member of the Guerin-Churchill Gang

During these drives she was not at all averse to ardent love-making; in fact, she invited caresses; she preferred to have her victim's arm about her waist and her head resting comfortably on his shirt bosom, for then she could bite or pull out the diamond; and that she never failed to do.

Whether, when discovered and accused, as she sometimes was, she swallowed the diamond is not known. On several occasions she was arrested, but always escaped through lack of evidence against her.

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Throughout her career, May Vechs, or May Churchill, as she was known from time to time, has manifested a playful disposition. Once she made a wager that she would invade the Lambs' Club—the famous organization of actors and their friends in West Thirty-sixth street, New York—and obtain a drink there.

Arraing nerself in her finest gown and donring her most tlashing jewels, she walked into the club. The scandalized Lambs tried to get rid of her, but she emphatically declined to depart until she had had a drink. This being provided and her bet won, she coolly marched away.

Always attractive to men, May Churchill seems to have steeled her heart against returning any of the affection bestowed upon her. She played with victins as a cat would with a mouse, but never for a moment did she lose sight of an opportunity to rob.

In 1899 she married a man of wealth named James F. Sharpe. The wedding took place in the Little Church Around the Corner, and Sharpe provided a handsome home for his bride.

Whether at the time Sharpe was ignorant of his wife's past, to be enlightened later, or whether he simply tired of her, is not known. In any event, he left her after a few menths of married life.

BARELY SAVED FROM DEATH

It was chagrin at this unexpected termination of her plans and the prospect of losing a liberal allowance of money, rather than love for Sharpe, that impelled her to attempt suicide by drinking poison at a place in Sixth avenue. Take poison, however, she did, and it Sixth avenue. Take poison, nowever, six her life was was only by the flutter of an eyelid that her life was

The couple returned to America, but soon decided that Paris offered a more promising field for their genius, and, consequently, they journeyed there, accompanied by George Miler. On this trip "Chicago May" posed as the wife of Miller.

Shortly after their arrival the safe in the office of the American Express Company was blown open and a sum said to be rearly 200,000 was stolen. On this occasion the French police were too quick for the clever American crooks, and they were gathered in before they could escape with their booty.

Guerin was convicted and sentenced to what was regarded virtually a life term of penal servitude on Devil's Island. No human being, it was believed, could survive such a term there. For complicity in the robbery the woman, on lune 14, 1902, was sent to a prison in France for five years.

Something over a year ago the astonishing statement was made that Guerin had escaped from Devil's Island. It was reported that he had been assisted by a woman, who managed to get him money with which to bribe the guards, and that this woman was none other than "Chicago Mey."

That some friends were working for him on the cutside was evident. He was removed without warning or reason from the prison in which he had been confined on the island, and set to work with a convict gang in the fields. When he and two other convicts found a convenient opportunity to slip into the woods, the guards, seemingly, were looking the other way. The next day, when a convict died in the hospital, the autherities huried the body and erected over it a grave-stone marked "Guerin."

With infinite labor, Guerin and his companions fashioned a rude dugout canoe, and in it, without food or water, set out for the coast of South America, 200 miles away.

On the way Guerin learned that his companions had

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On the way Guerin learned that his companions had planned to kill him and throw his body overboard. So for three days and nights he sat up with a revolver in his hand, compelling them to row.

After many adventures and much hardship, Guerin succeeded in reaching America again. Then he announced that he would settle down and lead an honest life. Apparently, he made no attempt to rejoin "Chicago May" or to call her to him.

It would have been better for him, perhaps, had he done that. Instead, he fell a victim to the wiles of another woman of his own shady set, and followed her to London. A few months ago it was stated that he had been crrested, turned over to the Paris police and that he would be sent back to Devil's Island.

SOME GREAT THINGS THAT GREW FROM SMALL BEGINNINGS

HEN the haughty autocrat of Rome strove to impress upon his beatman the important fact that "this craft carries Caesar and all his fortunes," a small leak might have caused a ludicrous, if not tragic, situation.

How often the small things of life—trivial, in-significant in themselves—lead to overpowering results. A cigarette stump burned up millions of dollars worth of Baltimore property.

HILE on the subject of fires, it is not out of place to mention the calamity that positive overteek Dresden Too.

One Perry, a rest. urant clerk, went to his room about 11 o'clock and ilt a lamp. The oil in the vessel caught fire, and Perry promptly threw the whole thing into the street.

Now it happened that a town hog was peacefully rooting the ground beneath the window, and the blazing lamp landed squarely on its back. The lamp was broken, the oil, fiercely burning, spread over the hog, and that astonished animal, with bud squeals of protest, promptly set out on a tour of the surrounding section. He had awakened to the situation.

Taking a rapid turn around part of the public square, the hog returned to the place where he had been assaulted and crawled under the building. Soon the restaurant structure was ablaze and the entire firefighing force of the town was called out. For a time it seemed that the whole of the east side of the town was doomed.

Finally, however, the blaze was conquered, after the floor of the restaurant had been torn up to get at the incendiary porker. The loss was covered by insurance, but this did not assuage the blistering pain in the hog's back

surance, but this aid not assuage in the hog's back.

George Adams, of Waterbury, Conn., was fatally wounded by a woodchuck. This animal is not regarded as feroclous, but the particular woodchuck that Adams encountered fired a rifle bullet into the man's

Adams was in Middleburg on business, and at night went with others in pursuit of an animal that had burrowed near the barn of Clifford Barnum. The men poured bucket after bucket of water into the hole, and soon the little animal, gasping for breath, appeared at

soon the little animal, gasping for breath, appeared at the entrance.

When Adams tried to push the woodchuck back under the water with the butt of his rifle the animal struck out with its paws, seized the trigger and discharged the weapon.

The bullet entered the man's stomach, causing a wound from which he died the next day. In the excitement following the shooting the woodchuck escaped.

The expenditure of six cents without per husband's

The expenditure of six cents without her husband's approval, it is asserted, caused an attack by him upon Mrs. William Leonard, of Paterson, N. J. She was



Some time later he was found dead-his high collar

Some time later he was found dead his high collar had choked him to death as he siept. The man was weak and the weight of his head over his sharp collar was sufficient to cause strangulation. Bathers at the seashore frequently get sand in their ears, but suffer no ill consequences other than a temporary annoyance. Sand in his ear, however, caused

the death of Herbert Lawrence, a lifeguard at Atlantic City.

While making a rescue early in August, Lawrence had some sand driven into his ear by the force of the waves. It could not be removed by ordinary methods, so the guard went to a hospital and submitted to an

This failed to relieve him, and an abscess formed in his head. Two other operations were performed, the third resulting fatally,

A common housefly caused Miss Mary Ryan, of Renovo, Pa., to lose the sight of one eye. Only with

difficulty was the other saved. While proceeding about her household occupations one day during the summer a fly flew into Miss Ryan's eye, causing her excruciating pain. A physician applied appropriate remedies, cut the eye continued to inflame. At last Miss Ryan was compelled to enter a hospital, where only extreme care enabled her to retain the sight of one of her eyes.

When Herman Winterfelt, of Fogelsville, Pa., goes fishing hereafter he will not put a fishhook in his mouth, or, if he does so, will be most careful to refrain from sneezing.

While overhauling his fishing tackle some time ago, preparatory to an expedition to a nearby pond. Winterfelt placed a hook, to which was attached several inches of line, into his mouth.

This would probably not have resulted in trouble if Wincertelt had not been overpowered by a desire to specze, and when he sneezed he swallowed the fish-hook and line. After an operation, two physicians succeeded in removing the hook, and Winterfelt fortunately suffered no ill results.

BABE FIRES ITS CRIB

Little Millard Lamont, a 16-month-old baby of Chester, Pa., found a match in his crib at night, and inplaying with it caused it to ignite. In a short time the bedelothing was on fire, and the child was severely burned about the face, arms and neck. Its screams aroused the mother, who was horrified to find her baby on fire, and who extinguished the flames with a rug.

Dr. C. W. Wilson, of Montreal, might have thought the mere stealing of a kiss a trivial matter, yet, according to a dispatch from Toronto, that little indiscretion was responsible for a jail sentence of seven days, imposed by the Judge of the Toronto police court.

The report stated that A. T. Severance, of New York, was sitting with his daughter in the rotunda of the King Edward Hotel, when Wilson slipped up behind the young lady, embraced her and kissed her.

Frequent attention is directed by the London Lancet, one of the world's leading medical journals, to the perils menacing health and life due to little things. Recently the paper sounded a warning against the joyous bridal cake. Little Millard Lamont, a 16-month-old baby of Ches-

cake.

The writer inveighs against the "disgusting and filthy practice of blowing icing and other sweet stuff on bride's cakes and other ornamental pastry by means of tubes applied to the lips of pastry cooks."

One case was cited by the writer of a pastry cook who followed this practice of icing cakes while he was suffering from a well-matured disease of the mouth and throat.